

Wayland, June 20th, 1877

Friend Higginson,

Though it is always one of the pleasantest events of my life to meet you, I had an especial reason for wishing to have an interview with you when I was in Boston last winter. I am very much puzzled about Spiritualism, and I had a great desire to ask what was your present state of mind on that subject. Have your views changed materially since you wrote "The Rationale of Spiritualism"? In common with most thoughtful minds, I have been repelled by the low communications, and the disgusting

trickery of many of the professional mediums. But I have had several inexplicable experiences when no professional medium, and no Spiritualist, was present, and when circumstances rendered deception impossible. I am very desirous to investigate the subject rationally, but how to do it?

In scientific subjects, the investigator can handle and dissect, and analyze, and combine the substances whose nature he wishes to discover.

But on this subject, we use our faculties to watch shadows. Yet could these shadows cross our path, if not produced by realities somewhere?

I read both the spiritualistic and the materialistic sides of the question; but always there remains

in my mind a settled conviction that phenomena are constantly occurring, which science does not, and cannot, explain by any known laws. Doubtless, these phenomena, like everything else, are governed by universal laws, but how to get at those laws? Even the sceptical Harriet Martineau says that a simple girl could at any time put her into trances, during which her mind wandered in regions unknown to her, and she appends a note acknowledging that she could not explain these phenomena.

Do you know of any perfectly reliable person, with mediumistic powers, in the vicinity of Boston?

I know it is presumptuous to ask such a busy person as yourself to answer questions merely to

enlighten my mind. My excuse is
that it is not find persons whose
veracity and rational tendencies
render them perfectly reliable.
Whatever you see fit to say shall
remain strictly between ourselves,

Another motive
for writing to you at this time
is to ask whether you are
sufficiently interested in
philology to care for
Max Müller's "Science of
Languages". I have a copy,
2 vols. which I should be
happy to give you, if you want
it.

Your affectionate old friend,

L. Maria Child.



Ms. A. 9. 1. 37. 20